

LEARNER AUTONOMY: INVESTIGATING INDONESIAN ENGLISH TEACHERS' BELIEFS

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ABSTRAK

Otonomi pelajar yang membuat pelajar bertindak lebih efektif telah lebih memperhatikan penelitian dan praktik pengajaran pendidikan di abad ke-21 dan telah menjadi salah satu topik utama dalam penelitian saat ini. Ini menunjukkan bahwa otonomi pelajar mendapat perhatian lebih dalam konteks Indonesia. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki keyakinan guru Indonesia tentang otonomi pelajar. Data dikumpulkan melalui metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan Kuisioner. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis dan diinterpretasikan dalam bentuk tingkat persentase untuk item dan pertanyaan terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru mengenal konsep otonomi pelajar dan percaya bahwa itu memiliki peran penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa yang efektif untuk pelajar Indonesia dan harus dipertimbangkan sebagai strategi dalam meningkatkan kecakapan bahasa Inggris mereka. Temuan penelitian ini diharapkan memberikan wawasan baru kepada guru dan pembuat kebijakan tentang reformasi otonomi pelajar di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Otonomi Pelajar, Kepercayaan Guru, Pembelajaran Mandiri

ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy which makes learner act more effectively has paid more attention educational research and teaching practices in the 21st century and has become one of the main topics in the current research. This suggests that learner autonomy has received more attention in Indonesian contexts. The aims of this study was to investigate the Indonesian EFL teachers beliefs about learner autonomy. Data were collected through qualitative methods by using Questionnaire, The collected data were analyzed and interpreted in the form of percentage level for related items and questions. The results of the study showed that teachers are familiar with the concept of learner autonomy and believe that it has essential role in effective language learning for Indonesian EFL learners and should be consider as a strategy in enhancing their English Proficiency. The findings of this study will provide teachers and policy-makers new insights into learner autonomy reforms in Indonesia.

Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Teachers' Beliefs, Autonomous Learning.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Learner autonomy has paid attention for some 30 years in foreign language teaching, much has been written about what learner autonomy actually is, the rationale and its implication in teaching and learning process. (Palfreyman, 2003) claimed that it improves the language learning quality and makes individuals ready for learning during their life. It is argued that autonomous learning can improve Indonesian students' EFL learning proficiency.

learners who have ownership see learning as something they have control over it . on the

other hand, Teachers ought to help the students to foster the learners autonomy, (Dam, 2000) emphasizes that the development of learner autonomy can be enhanced through the involvement of the learners in their learning. Furthermore, teacher also must have belief that learner autonomy is worth to combine in their pedagogy.

The purpose of this study was to investigate English language teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy, to investigate this area we need to define some key terms first and then begin our work of teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Autonomy

Learner autonomy is defined as learner's willingness and ability to take responsibility, to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate his/her learning with tasks that are constructed in negotiation with and support from the teacher (Nguyen, 2012). Hence, we can say that learners should realize that success in learning relies on the student as on the teacher (Scharle, 2000)

Autonomy in the classroom

Traditionally, learner autonomy has been confined to places other than the classroom. But nowadays, the focus of the learner autonomy process is on the learner to run their own learning in the formal settings. There is a shifting of roles between teachers and students and classroom activities (Benson, Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning, 2001). So, learner autonomy in the classroom context involves a change from teacher-centered learning setting to learner-centered learning setting.

Teachers Beliefs on Learner Autonomy

All teachers hold beliefs, it can be defined about their work, their students, their roles and responsibilities. Teachers' beliefs can be defined as 'assumptions about all aspects of their work which teachers consider to be true or false' (Phipps and Borg 2009: 381, cited in (Barillaro, 2011). (Hernandez, 2015) pointed out that beliefs guide teachers' behavior and inform teachers' practice by serving as a kind of interpretative framework through which they made sense of what they do in their classrooms.

The teachers' role in promoting learner autonomy

Teachers play the significant role in motivating their students and promote their autonomy to become an autonomous learner. They have to state their beliefs about teaching and learner autonomy (Barillaro, 2011). Besides, teachers have the roles of consultant and facilitator who provide psychological, social and technical support for their learners (Zhuang, 2010). It means that teachers do not only facilitate the learning process, but also provide psychological and knowledge for the learner to promote learner autonomy.

Studies on Teachers Beliefs about Learner Autonomy

There have been a number of studies conducting on learner autonomy. (Balcikanli, 2010) conducted a study on student teacher beliefs about learner autonomy. At the end of this study He found that student teachers had clear ideas about learner autonomy and the involvement of students in the learning process. They agreed that students should be involved in the process of decision making regarding the objectives of the course, classroom management, homework tasks, and the selection of materials. In another study (Borg, 2012) investigated language teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and found that the teachers were positively willing to the notion of learner autonomy and its particular benefits for language learners. They also found that most of the teachers believed that they could promote learner autonomy in their teaching and among their learners.

METHODOLOGY

Research question:

What are Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy?

PARTICIPANT

The participants of this study are the English teachers at a senior high school in Cibinong-Bogor. Three teachers were invited to be the participants of this research.

INSTRUMENT

The instrument used for gathering information was a questionnaire which was originally developed by (Nguyen, 2012), but some modifications were done to the questionnaire according to the purpose of the study. It consisted of a section of questionnaire. The section consisted of 21 questions which were in the form of Likert-scale items on a four-point scale of agreement. Questionnaire items include information about: Sense of responsibility, beliefs about student, constraints to autonomy and fostering autonomy.

PROCEDURE

The questionnaires were distributed among the teachers with referring to the language institutes. They could complete them at that time or take it back in a day. The collected

questionnaires then were analyzed to get the results.

DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting data from the participants, they were analyzed and changed into descriptive data. The questionnaire items with the related content were grouped together and after that percentage was calculated for them.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Sense of Responsibility

The first point of the questionnaire was teachers' beliefs about responsibility. It means that teachers responsibility provided the teaching and learning process for an effective learning.

Table 1. The Result of Sense of responsibility

Teachers beliefs about responsibility

Questionnaire Number	Statements	Percentage
1	I am responsible for determining the objectives for the lesson in my classroom.	86,6%
2	I am responsible for choosing the learning content for each lesson.	80%
3	I am responsible for evaluating my students' learning progress in each lesson.	86,6%
4	I am responsible for selecting the methods and techniques to be used in each lesson.	93,3%
5	I am responsible for monitoring	86,6%

	the learning process in each lesson.	
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The result from the table above indicated that most of the teachers regarded themselves as having responsibility for all aspects of the teaching and learning process in their classroom. The teachers response in these five items of the questionnaire that 86,6% of the teachers agreed that they are responsible for determining the objectives for the lesson in the classroom. Approximately, 80% believed that they are responsible in choosing the learning content, 86,6% believed that they, not their students were responsible for evaluating student progress, 93,3% believed that they were responsible for selecting methods and techniques to be used, and 86,6% believed they were responsible in monitoring the learning process.

2. Beliefs About students

The second point was investigated teachers' beliefs about student which exposed automous learner.

Table 2. The result of beliefs about student

Teachers' Beliefs about Students' Ability to be Autonomous

Questionnaire Number	Statements	Percentage
6	My students are able to decide the objectives for each lesson.	40%
7	My students are able to choose their learning materials for each lesson.	40%
8	My students are able to choose their learning activities for each lesson.	60%
9	My students are able to evaluate the study outcomes of each lesson.	60%

Table 2 present the teachers' beliefs about the students' ability regarding learner autonomy. The teachers response to these 4 items of the questionnaire indicated that less than % the teachers agreed that their students are autonomous, in other words the teachers held negative beliefs about their students ability to be said as autonomous learner. As we can see, 40% of the teachers unsure that their students were able to decide the objectives for the lesson, 40% unsure that their students were able to choose their learning materials, 60% unsure that their students were able to choose their learning activities, and 60% unsure that their students were able to evaluate the study outcomes of the lesson.

3. Constraints to Autonomy

The third point was investigated constraints to autonomy which means teachers' beliefs

Table 3. The result of Constraints to Autonomy
Teachers' Beliefs about Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy

Questionnaire Number	Statements	Percentage
10	Learner autonomy is only achieved by certain learners.	70%
11	Low level of technology application hinders fostering learner autonomy.	86,6%
12	Examinations are barriers to the development of learner autonomy in my class.	86,6%
13	Governmental educational policy is the main constraint to fostering learner autonomy in my class .	80%
.14	The syllabus is supposed to	80%

	determine everything that a teacher does in the class.	
15	The teachers' knowledge about learner autonomy is a main constraint to fostering learner autonomy in my class.	80%

Table 3 presents the teachers' beliefs about constraints to fostering learner autonomy in their teaching contexts. The teachers response to the 6 items of the questionnaire. The teacher response an agreement of the 6 items about constraints to fostering their students' autonomy. 70% teachers agreed that learner autonomy cannot be accepted by all students, 86,6% agreed that low technology hinders fostering autonomy, 86,6% agreed that examination barriers in fostering autonomy, 80% agreed that governmental of education is the main to foster autonomy, 80% agreed that syllabus determines what teacher does in the class. And 80% agreed that teachers knowledge fosters autonomy.

4. Fostering Autonomy

The fourth point was exposed approaches to foster autonomy which means some approaches provided learner autonomy.

Table 4. The result of Fostering Autonomy
Teachers' Beliefs about Approaches to Fostering Learner Autonomy

Questionnaire Number	Statements	Percentage
16	Providing students with learning materials and resources.	86,6%
17	Applying ICT into language learning.	80%
18	Training students to develop their skills	80%

	and strategies to become autonomous .	
19	Curriculum reform.	66,6%
20	Cooperative learning with other students and teachers.	86,6%
21	Training teachers.	80%

Table 4 present the teachers' beliefs about fostering autonomy. with regard to the first item, that providing students with learning materials and resources would foster learner autonomy, 86,6% of teachers strongly agree that Providing students with learning materials and resources can foster learner autonomy, 80% agree that applying ICT into language learning can foster learner autonomy, Approximately, 66,6% indicated that there must be curriculum reform to enhance learner autonomy, 86,6% strongly agree that cooperative learning with other students and teachers helped to foster learner autonomy, and 80% agree that additional training of teachers would facilitate the development of greater learner autonomy.

Indonesian English teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy

Based on the instrument used in the research, the data of questionnaire showed in relation to teachers' sense of responsibility, the findings showed that more than 80% teachers agreed that they were responsible for teaching and learning process, with regard to the result of the teachers' beliefs about students ability to become autonomous learner, the result showed less than 60% the teachers do not hold positive beliefs that their students are autonomus, 80% teachers agree that there were constraints hindering learner autonomy in their contexts. The data of this phase teachers believed that specific action can help students to foster learner autonomy.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the results of data analysis, this study showed that teachers believed that they were responsible for teaching and learning process. They defined that learner autonomy is the process of learning that's

not only the teachers that have roles but also the students in the learning process. According to teachers, their current students can be said as autonomous learners. In the context of fostering autonomy, teachers is expected to be less control in the teaching and learning process, and they also must have positive beliefs about their students' abilities. Besides, the teachers agreed that if the learner have choices to use some medias or the choice of learning method, learner autonomy will be promoted more. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of previous studies such as Nguyen (2012) and Balcikanli (2010) which found that teachers are aware of the concept of learner autonomy and expected to improve their knowledge about learning process and they should know that promoting learner autonomy will increase more effective learning.

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